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DOCTOR WHO

MEGLOS

IN-VISION THE MAKING OF A TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES

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THE FINAL bombardment was on its way to Yoraydra; three long cones of superaggravated nuclear fuels that had been launched on automatic, forty minutes after the demise of the nation they had been designed to protect. The people of Yoraydra huddled closer in the shelters.

On the outskirts of the deserted, siren-cleansed city stood the Screens. It was the screens which had destroyed the enemy nation. Between the five huge panels was the laboratory. Inside, Meglos was pacing up and down. His pallid features were tensed beneath the hood of his long black cloak. His bony fingers tapped at his sides. Where was Ravnok? His assistant should have returned by now with the Dodecahedron.

A screen bleeped for his attention. He spun around. The face of Councillor Hordrus had appeared. "Meglos, you have betrayed our nation with your futile dreams of conquest! You have been the ruin of us all!"

"Fool!" spat Meglos. "It was your own weak natures that brought us to the brink of total annihilation. I offered you power." He gestured around him. "The greatest achievement of the Zolpha-Thuran race. My achievement. The screens are indestructible, their limits beyond your comprehension."

Hordrus shook his wise old head. "Meglos, your own words betray you. Yoraydra is to die. Our world is finished."

Meglos laughed. "Worm. You are as a particle of dust in my navel that I poke out and flick to the floor. With the Screens I shall save the city. You shall become slaves to my will. The Zolpha-Thuran empire - *my* empire - will expand through space and time!"

"And how," asked Hordrus, "do you intent to do all of this without your precious Dodecahedron?"

"My assistant is bringing it now."

"Not so. We intercepted him. The power source of your great machine, Meglos, is I should think, by now -" he glanced at his watch " - well on its way to the sister world."

Meglos blanched. "Tigella? You have sent my Dodecahedron to a planet of primitives! You wizened fool, you have condemned your own people to death."

The old ruler of Yoraydra chuckled. "I make the sacrifice gladly. I feel I have saved the universe from your marauding ego, Meglos." He reached a wrinkled hand forward and switched off the visi-link."

Meglos fumed. He ran through available options in his mind. There was no choice. He would have to operate his contingency plan. It would mean subjecting himself to the light beam.

He flicked a series of switches and the laboratory began to sink into the ground. As it did, he checked that the host, the xerophyte, was in position. Then he made the final preparation. He activated the light beam and stepped into the cubicle.

As the beam began to eat away at his physical substance, Meglos felt the distant rumble of the missiles. His fellow Zolpha-Thurans were dead. Fools! Idiots! They dared to presume they could put an end to him so easily.

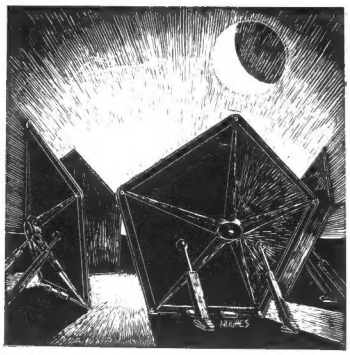
The process would take thousands of years; the transfer of his psyche to a shade of light and the subsequent realignment into the host form - the only form of life that could survive in the wasteland Zolpha-Thura would become. And then the hour of vengeance would come. He would reclaim the Dodecahedron and unleash its powers. No planet would be safe from the Screens.

No, the universe had not heard the last of Meglos.

Gareth Roberts

IN THE TRADITION of worlds such as Dulkis, Argolis and Skaro, Zolpha-Thura is a dead planet, its suicide engineered by the hubris of its inhabitants. To the Doctor and Romana, Zolpha-Thura is best remembered for its Screens: vast metal pentagons that stand silent sentinel over the crystal sands, their origin and purpose unknown.

But before the genocidal civil war, Zolpha-Thura was much, much more. From the remains of their civilisation, and the powers that the sole survivor Meglos wields, it seems the Zolpha-Thurans were geniuses. Indeed, the sheer power of the Dodecahedron and Meglos' chronic hysteretic loop aren't too dissimilar to the Eye of Harmony and the Time Lords' weapon of choice, the Time Loop (see Aliens, Vardans, Fendahl *et al*). Had they not destroyed themselves, one wonders what sort of an influence they would have had over the rest of the Galaxy.



But what exactly *were* the Zolpha-Thurans? Apparently cactuses, yet Meglos' control room seemed more suited to humanoids than xerophytes. Capable of inserting their life-force into other creatures, yet able to modulate themselves along particular wavelengths of light - there doesn't seem to be a simple answer to that particular question. Terrance Dicks suggests in his book that the Zolpha-Thurans took over other life forms which they could then mould to their wills. The only pertinent factor appears to be the cactus aspect, given the vegetable nature of life on Zolpha-Thura's twin planet in the Prion system, Tigella.

Tigella also has its forbears in **Doctor Who.** Worlds with vicious, semi-sentient vegetation abound in the series: Spiridon, Mechanus, Kembel, even Skaro. Although the jungle doesn't appear to be quite as lethal as the fungus sprayers of Spiridon or the Gubbage Cones, the humanoid Tigellans were quite primitive, and would have been quite easy prey for the fronds and tendrils that lay in wait. Most of their early history was concerned with their fight against this surface vegetation, a fight that the Tigellans eventually surrendered. Fleeing into were trapped in their caves, they always dreamed of one day re-colonising the surface.

Underground, the Tigellan race developed into two irreconcilable factions - the Savants and the Deons, science versus religion. In the early days of scientific discovery, we could envisage a scenario similar to the Earth Renaissance, with the growth of logical thought blossoming from the old religious doctrines. That is until Ti, the Deons' god, sent down his very special version of manna from heaven.

After the destruction of Zolpha-Thura, the Dodecahedron materialised in the skies above Tigella. Naturally, the Deons saw it as a sign from Ti, and soon installed the Dodecahedron in its own chamber. The Deon religion absorbed the concept of this mathematical solid, while the Savants learnt how to absorb its prodigious energy output.

For ten thousand years, an uneasy stalemate reigned between the two opposing factions: the Deons allowed the Savants the most limited access (virtually none) to the Dodecahedron, while they continued their religious ceremonies. Instead of religious belief giving way to the rationality of science, the appearance of the Dodecahedron had reinforced the Deons' argument for an all-powerful Ti.

To the Savants, the Dodecahedron was an unimaginable source of power which could be harnessed to enable them to recapture the surface; to the Deons, the energy was the Dodecahedron's gift to Ti's people. Energy fluctuations were a matter of scientific curiosity to be measured and theorised upon by the Savants, and a cause for prayer and even sacrifice by the Deons. The friction between the two groups could not decrease: as the Savants' knowledge of the scientific doctrines grew, and the Deons stagnated and retrenched in their rituals and dogma, it was inevitable that something would give. Unfortunately for the Tigellans, they had no way of predicting that the Dodecahedron was not a gift, but a loan.

That is the scenario on Tigella: two groups of relatively primitive people, fiddling around with an energy source capable of powering the entire galaxy, secure in a ten thousand year long stalemate. A dangerous powder keg, and Meglos wants to light the fuse.

As leader of the Deon faith on Tigella, **LEXA** is no mere figurehead. She is a powerful and intelligent High Priestess, and like the rest of her faith she believes the Dodecahedron to be a sacred object, sent by their god to give them power, and that it is an object to worship and revere, not to examine. When the Dodecahedron's power begins to wane, she blames the sins of Tigella - which for her are embodied in the Savants' scientific research into the sacred artefact.

Realising something must be done to restore the Dodecahedron, she permits Zastor to request the Doctor's assistance. However, her mistrust of him and of all non-Deons is shown in her insistence that he take the Deon oath - her way of keeping authority while accepting compromise.

When the Meglos-Doctor enters the Power Room alone, her distrust grows along with her curiosity. And when she follows him, she meets an equally curious Savant, Caris. Their mutual fear and curiosity for a first, brief bond between the opposing sides.

Convinced that the power source has been taken back by a displeased god, Lexa seizes power and her faith persuades her to try and bring back the Dodecahedron by sacrificing the newly-arrived Doctor. As if to repent for her actions, she dies saving the Doctor's companion from a blaster bolt.

With the Dodecahedron gone forever, and the people of Tigella finally united and without a religious leader, does the planet's future lie with science or with faith?

As leader of all Tigellans, **ZASTOR** is caught in the middle between the Savants and the Deons. A wise and learned man, he maintains a balance of power, listening to both Lexa and Deedrix and trying to achieve compromise.

He realises that an answer to the Dodecahedron's failure cannot be found on Tigella, and seeks the aid of an impartial outsider - the Doctor, who he met five decades previously, and who he trusts. This action, he hopes, will resolve the physical and political power struggle on Tigella.

When the Doctor appears to betray him, Zastor is hurt and baffled, but does not leap to Lexa's hasty conclusions. He attempts instead to find a rational explanation of how there could be two Doctors on the planet. When he is proved right, his first action is one of loyalty to his friend - he rushes to save him from sacrifice.

The last Zolpha-Thuran, **MEGLOS** is the only survivor of a race which destroyed itself rather than unleash the power of the Dodecahedron.

Meglos is highly advanced and intelligent, and his talents include transmutation. His knowledge of the Time Lords, his ability to see in to the TARDIS and then later to trap it in a chronic hysteresis, places the Zolpha-Thurans in the small but dangerous category of races who can interfere with time.

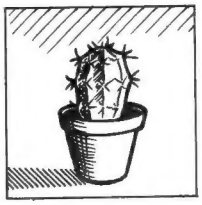
Meglos has little respect for lesser species, as his casual appropriation of the Earthling's form (regardless of the strain on the victim's body) demonstrates. He has only suspicion and contempt for the Gaztaks, and is clearly frustrated by his dependence on them. Doubtless his thousand-year isolation exacerbated his paranoia and power mania. Ironically, he is destroyed along with his planet by the power he sought to control and exploit.

The self-appointed leader of a looting and pillaging group of Gaztak mercenaries, **GENERAL GRUGGER** will do anything to further his own ends and make as many credits as possible. The capture of an Earthling for transport to Zolpha-Thura is easy money. But the speed in which he tries to dupe Meglos shows his diminished sense of loyalty - which Meglos has anticipated.

Grugger's only allegiance seems to be to his species - he is proud of his mercenary occupation, and enjoys correcting Brotadac about the potential value of items, and he is concerned that his men are kept happy. He is clearly more than annoyed to lose three of them in the fight on Tigella.

Grugger is not an entirely stupid man, but he lacks the ability, experience and scientific background of people like Meglos and Romana. The ease with which Romana outwits the Gaztaks shows how out of their depth they are. Perhaps Grugger has anticipated this by surrounding himself with men less intelligent than himself. Next to Brotadac, he is a clever and cunning leader. And a rich one.

His lack of intuition culminates in his inability to tell Meglos from the Doctor, despite obvious clues. He and the remaining Gaztaks perish along with Meglos as the planet of Zolpha-Thura is smashed into infinitesimal fragments by the power of the Dodecahedron.



ORIGINS: Initially MEGLOS was maligned as the story which failed to live up to the promise of pop-video style and pace seen a week earlier in THE LEISURE HIVE. Certainly fan circles assumed this was to be the look of **Doctor Who** in the Nineties, and voiced some exception to a show which, with its small sets and relatively small cast, looked more like a throwback to the Sixties. Even producer John Nathan-Turner later admitted it was very much "a traditional story about a megalomaniac wanting to conquer the Universe".

The final verdict was bottom placing for MEGLOS in the season poll conducted by ***Doctor Who Monthly*** shortly after season 18's completion in Spring 1981.

The passing of time has done little to temper these initial judgements even though, in purely television terms, the story and its production were almost text book examples of how to make a stereotype **Doctor Who** serial, on time and very much within budget, while obeying just about all the rules laid down in Malcolm Hulke's book *Writing for Television*.

Script writers John Flanagan and Andrew McCulloch both had drama school backgrounds, and had acted in repertory theatre before turning their interests towards writing. Flanagan's background included the lead role in the Granada series **Parkin's Patch**, which was almost totally studio bound, apart from some location work where the character drove a Landrover - he played a Yorkshire village policeman. He became a member of Granada television's "Stables Theatre" company . Flanagan described this as: "supposed to be a breeding-ground for new writers and actors". When the company closed after two years, he became a journalist/presenter for **Granada Reports**.

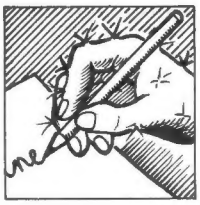
McCulloch lists Hulke's book as one of the references he and Flanagan worked from when they wrote their first commissioned TV script, a pilot called **Bricks Without Straw** - a comedy pilot in ATV's **The Sound of Laughter** series, about a firm of cowboy builders and decorators. (It was based on McCulloch's personal experience of a cheap but disastrously bad team of builders who worked on his London house in the 1970s.disastrous. The series was not commissioned - ATV chose A Sharp Intake of Breath instead.)

The need for a hastily commissioned four-part **Doctor Who** story arose as Christopher Bidmead considered his plans for the season. At the time of his appointment as script editor only three workable scripts existed "in the cupboard". THE LEISURE HIVE had already been fully commissioned by John Nathan-Turner as it was the nearest to a set of complete rehearsal scripts. Next in order of readiness was "The Witch Lords" by Terrance Dicks. Although requiring a lot of updating and rewriting, this 1977 story was Bidmead's first formal commission and so was slotted in as the second story for production.

Story three was more of a problem. "Erinella" was a story about druids and dragons set in Wales, written by director Pennant Roberts. However, despite being a workable story it was essentially a fantasy with almost fairy-tale overtones of magic and legend. It was exactly the kind of story Christopher Bidmead did not want for his vision of a series based more on real-science.

Bidmead's rejection of "Erinella" left a vacuum that would need to be filled before story three rehearsals began in June - a gap of just three months in which to pull together a set of four viable scripts.

Finding out to his dismay that the BBC did not keep a centrally organised index-file of writers, Bidmead pursued his quest for new blood for the programme in two ways. The first was to try any big-name authors of science-fiction he could find - a search which failed with Nigel Kneale, but which did succeed with Christopher Priest and Steve Gallagher. The second way was to try anyone from his old days as an actor who had gone into writing. This search resulted in two ex-performers, Johnny Byrne and Andrew McCulloch; the latter came to Bidmead's attention after he saw a broadcast of the pilot **Bricks Without Straw**.



SCRIPT: John Flanagan and Andrew McCulloch met at the Central School of Drama in London in the 1960s. As an actor, Flanagan had been assistant stage manager at Bristol Old Vic, as well as in France and Ireland. Television appearances included Play for Today, **Sounding Brass, The Sweeney,** 15 episodes of Softly, Softly, appearances in Granada's lunch-time series Crown Court over six years, and a sitcom with Maureen Lipman called **A Soft Touch.** Flanagan's film appearances include Sweeney 2 and The Red Baron..

Both Flanagan and McCulloch wanted to be comedy writers, feeling that the best TV comedy series tended to come from partnerships. They started writing in the late seventies, and saw as their role models successful duos like Galton and Simpson, Clement and Le Frenais, and firmly believed the secret of writing sitcoms was creating good double-acts. Consequently both men were surprised to find themselves phoned up by the script editor of **Doctor Who** and asked to submit a technically sound four-part serial that would emphasise science over fantasy. As Flanagan admitted in the fanzine *Images*: "Neither Andy or I are particularly science fiction buffs, but we know about adventure stories."

Interviewed in 1981 by the fanzine *Definitive Gaze*, John Flanagan recalled their reaction to Bidmead's phone call: "In the first instance there was no money involved. He said, 'Put the plot on two sides of paper, that's all; a storyline as opposed to a synopsis or a breakdown. Then, if I like the story, develop it after that'. So we submitted him two sides of foolscap. Chris liked the basic idea of the story and he suggested a few changes. We were put right on certain details because neither Andy nor I are particular fans of **Doctor Who**, in other words, not addicts. Of course we were very familiar with the programme and wouldn't have written for it had we not liked it.

"We were given this sort of **Doctor Who** 'Bible'. It's continually updated every time something new happens. There's a whole section on the TARDIS; what it can do, what you can do with it, what it carries, what it can't do, etc. So you have to learn about all the basic hardware and the regulars like the Doctor."

Taking their brief to heart, Flanagan and McCulloch came up with a story where science literally triumphs over mysticism. They relished the opportunities the commission gave them. Flanagan: "You're given all these regular characters, but then you can put them anywhere in the Universe. You've got great

scope to use your imagination because you're not pinned down. If you're writing for Emmerdale Farm or **Juliet Bravo**, there are fixed limits that have styled the programme. On **Doctor Who** you can do anything. At the same time, because you can do anything, it's very difficult. To sustain an adventure story for two hours it has to have a climax at the end of ever episode."

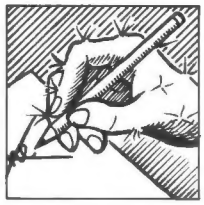
As comedy writers, the pair had most fun with the characters of the Gaztaks, although they felt the BBC misinterpreted their ideas somewhat by dressing them to look like Mongol tribesmen. Flanagan: "They were supposed to be guys who didn't have a planet of their own, so they would wear a variety of space hardware rather than them all wearing the same thing. Some could wear NASA garb because they'd found it. Brotadac's lusting after the Doctor's coat is because they had never been to Earth - they'd never seen one like that. We also wanted that they should show them later having picked up some of the Tigellan's garb."

Neither writer had any input to the casting of the pirates although they were pleased that so many comic performers were chosen.

"There was a character called Brotadac who was the right hand man of General Grugger. Well Brotadac was a character we were very fond of. He was very stupid and fairly extreme and knowing the history of the series, we knew they'd get a fairly over-the-top ham actor to play him. In fact Brotadac, the name, is an anagram of 'bad actor' which was an in-joke that no-one spotted at all.

"We had nothing to do with the casting, but a very good actor called Frederick Treves played him. He normally gets bank managers and solicitors and, like all actors, he resents being typecast, so he enjoyed the opportunity to play something slightly over-the-top. We told him in the bar afterwards that Brotadac was an anagram of 'bad actor', and he fell about laughing."

In keeping the regular characters occupied, their biggest difficulty was with K•9, as Flanagan explained: "K•9 is a super-dog. He can open anything. You can't get him captured because he's got that thing on the end of his nose! So we had him break down - his batteries run down. Romana was also a Time Lord - you'd got two Time Lords and this super-dog. Well, to get them in trouble... It was very difficult to create baddies who could actually deal with that kind of resistance."



SCRIPT EDITING: The initial plotline went in under the title "The Last Sol-Fataran" but was quickly amended to "The Last Zolpha-Thuran" when it was pointed out that the name too closely resembled Sontaran. At one stage, the story was briefly known as "The Golden Pentangle". By March it had been truncated still further to MEGLOS as part of John Nathan-Turner's drive to get away from "The Something of Something" style of story titling and towards shorter, punchier names. Curiously, as it went through production, the title reverted in June 1980 to "The Last Zolpha-Thuran", before finally being confirmed as MEGLOS.

As usual, commissioning a story from two writers instead of one did not incur any additional costs to the **Doctor Who** Office. Fees were the same - they just had to be split between two people.

By April 24th a full set of rehearsal scripts were ready. Flanagan and McCulloch had obeyed the restrictions almost to the letter - fewer than a dozen speaking roles, limited numbers of extras, a small amount of model work, just over half-a-dozen sets per episode, and a mixture of exterior and interior sets that would work out at less than twenty minutes of filming on location.

Since the writers themselves did not have science backgrounds, Bidmead developed the notion of the Chronic Hysteresis, in which the Doctor and Romana are trapped "like flies in amber".

Lexa's death was not in the original script (and in the transmitted version, it is unclear whether she sacrifices herself to save Romana or just accidentally gets in the way of the fatal shot while shouting a warning). The production team guided the writers to dispose of the character in a more meaningful way, since she served no further plot purpose. John Flanagan explained his approach in the particular circumstances of **Doctor Who**: "It's very difficult to justify killing a goody, but you can destroy forces of evil. But if you have a halfway character, who's misguided, then they can die

"For technical reasons, we didn't want Lexa after that point in the story. She was only useful in the story earlier when the origin of the Dodecahedron wasn't known. When it was known, her character became redundant. She couldn't just disappear, and it seemed a neat way that, in order to get over that they were trapped somewhere, she gave up her life having seen the truth eventually.

"It was, I think, suggested by the producer or the script editor that it was a good way to resolve a character that was of no further use."

More details of script changes appear in Jeremy Bentham's article *Double takes* this issue.

Tom Baker stands between his two alter egos at Tussaud's - the Doctor and Meglos

DIRECTOR & TEAM: Flanagan and McCulloch had imagined the exteriors would be done outside - a redressed forest for the jungle and the inevitable quarry for Zolpha-Thura. John Nathan-Turner had other ideas. Keen to spend his tight budget as effectively as he could, he determined that at least three of the serials in this season should be totally studio bound - a variation on the formula he had

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Costume drama

JUNE HUDSON tells IN•VISION about her busy year, and of the pressures of studio work

OF ALL THE **Doctor Who**s I did, MEGLOS is the one from which I have the least memories. 1980 was a very busy year for me. Apart from **Doctor Who** I had two other dramas, **Braces High** and **The Combination**, and several episodes of **To the Manor Born**. Around the time MEGLOS was made I was also heavily involved with preparations for the opening of the exhibition at Madame Tussauds, for which duplicates of several of Tom and Lalla's costumes were going to be required.

I do recall there was very little money available for MEGLOS. I don't know why; possibly John Nathan-Turner, being very canny, wanted to save on this show so he could spend somewhere else. It was great fun to do although very pressured. One of those other programmes I did in 1980 was hit by several problems and, as a result, it delayed my being able to come and work full time on MEGLOS, at least during the early stages of its production.

I had worked with Terence Dudley before, most notably on **Survivors**. He was a kind man, but rather gaunt and very serious. It was very difficult to get him to smile. On MEGLOS he permanently wore a pair of very dark sun glasses so you could never see his eyes to know what he was thinking or how he was reacting to your suggestions. He did back me up, though, in an almighty row I had with the lighting manager the first day we went into the studio.

The Savants I wanted to look very crisp and clean. They were all supposed to be scientists and technicians, the sort of people you traditionally associate with wearing starched white lab coats. The trousers were all off-the-peg black slacks we had bought from a shop, matched with pairs of black boots that were, again, all purchased from stores. But the tops were specially designed, made from a white, quilted cotton with silver edging.

The problem for the lighting manager was that the tunic material was so white he was having difficulty illuminating the rest of the set, so he asked me, quite bluntly, if I could paint down the costumes and spray them a duller grey. Out of the corner of my eye I could see John Nathan-Turner trying very hard not to laugh. He knew the pressures I had faced getting all these costumes completed in a very short space of time, and knew this was exactly the kind of comment I didn't want to hear on the first day of shooting. I refused quite adamantly and suggested instead they should tone the lighting down if they didn't want the costumes to flare. Rather reluctantly this is what they ended up doing and, with hindsight, I think it actually made the show look better.

As always on a **Doctor Who**, Lalla's costume was enormous fun to do. John Nathan-Turner was very keen on continuity so for the first episode she wore the blue sailor suit I had made for THE LEISURE HIVE, before changing into her new outfit which I based on Burnett's image of Little Lord Fauntleroy; a short, tailored jacket, knee-length trousers and a very frilly shirt.

We were under specific instructions to avoid blue in this story because of all the special effects, so I gave Lalla a red, foam-backed velvet outfit that was antique printed and fretwork cut to make it look very ornate. Underneath she wore a shirt in Brussels lace and a pair of white, silk stockings over matching red, buckled shoes.

For Edward Underdown's costume I used a polyester jersey material which looked far heavier than it actually was. We all knew Edward was terribly ill and so, this way, it would be cooler for him to wear under the hot studio lights.

The Deons I wanted to look rather Egyptian. Again I used foam backing to add weight and body to their tunics and tabards, which were made from a quilted curtain material. Each of them wore items of perspex jewellery which were cut from sheets of coloured perspex we had bought locally - in fact from the same place in Shepherds Bush I had bought all the perspex for THE LEISURE HIVE. As Jacqueline Hill had dark hair, I gave her an all-encompassing head-piece with long strands of blonde hair emerging from the back to emphasise that the Deons and the Savants were essentially of the same race.

The pirates were where we really saved money. As they were supposed to be scavengers anyway, I literally scoured through the costume store, pulling out anything I thought would be suitable. I even remember picking up a hub-cap I saw lying in a gutter one morning, thinking it would do as part of the artefacts worn by these rather gypsy-like mercenaries.

Bill Fraser predominantly wore an outfit left over from the BBC production of **Macbeth** although I did add, slightly re-dressed, one of the hats I had made for THE RIBOS OPERATION. Frederick Treves similarly wore a **Macbeth** costume although, because it was in the script that he had an obsession with collecting long coats, I had specially made for him a long quilted coat in a matching coloured fabric.

I did notice Tom Baker had stopped wearing the hat I had bought for him to go with his new outfit in THE LEISURE HIVE. He was quite ill at this time and I think he found it uncomfortable to wear, especially in the heat of a studio.

As I said at the beginning MEGLOS is not my favourite **Doctor Who**, but it is a good example of how costume designers are expected to improvise and make as much use as they can of costumes from stock when there is little money to be had. In that respect I think the story succeeds very well. I•V

Continued from page 5

worked out for Graham Williams' three years. Having committed to filming "The Wasting" and THE LEISURE HIVE, he decided MEGLOS could work as all studio.

Determined not to use any former **Doctor Who** directors, Nathan-Turner looked to that other long-running series he had worked with as production unit manager, **All Creatures Great and Small**.

Of those he knew well from there, Terence Dudley was the most famous name. A playwright turned script writer (**The River Flows East**, 1960), Dudley became a director for the BBC in the 1960s, working on **Maigret**, as well as episodes of **Dr. Finlay's Casebook**, **The Troubleshooters, Vendetta, and Softly, Softly.** In the seventies, he directed episodes of **Oil Strike North**, and in the same year as MEGLOS he worked on **Flesh and Blood**. Dudley also had experience as a producer: **The Big Pull**, **Cluff** (which he also directed), **The Mask of Janus**, and **The First Lady**. In the Seventies he came to prominence as producer of two highly successful quasi-science-fiction series, **Doomwatch** and **Survivors**, as well as producer of the 1973 series **The Regiment**. Dudley directed episodes of each of these 1970s series. **Survivors** also marked his first on-camera appearance - his is the bespectacled face seen at the beginning of every episode condemning civilisation to oblivion by dropping the flask of plague bacteria.

After **Survivors** Terence Dudley left the BBC to become a freelance director, and it was in this capacity that he had worked on **All Creatures Great and Small**.

Set design became the responsibility of Philip Lindley. Although a long-serving BBC staff member, Lindley had tended to work primarily for the Plays department and had ambitions of becoming a director. He had worked once before, with Barry Letts, on the 1975 **Doctor Who** serial, THE ANDROID INVASION.

Being an odd-numbered serial, it was June Hudson's turn again to provide the costumes, while make-up, a fairly late appointment, went to Cecile Hay-Arthur whose previous shows had been REVENGE OF THE CYBERMEN, UNDERWORLD and the previous year's DESTINY OF THE DALEKS, where she had been paired with her friend June Hudson.

Visual effects was handed to Steve Drewett. A skilled craftsman, especially in the working and cutting of fibre glass, foam plastics and latex, Drewett's apprenticeship at London's Natural History Museum made him an ideal candidate for any show requiring exotic flora or fauna. His **Doctor Who** debut had been as an assistant on THE FACE OF EVIL, for which he constructed all the Horda models. MEGLOS would be his first job as a fully-fledged designer, and would prove valuable experience for his next major assignment, David Maloney's big-budget serial, **The Day of the Triffids**.

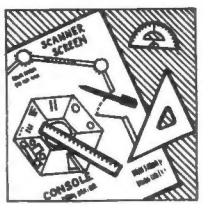
Handling electronic effects was veteran Dave Jervis, who faced an additional overhead with this story - evaluating and reporting on the use and effectiveness of the Scene-Sync process.

The allocation of the Scene-Sync equipment to **Doctor Who** was not the choice of John Nathan-Turner (see *That synching feeling* on page 10), although he undoubtedly was consulted about the story where its use would be most effectively made. Scene-Sync was offered to the programme free of charge to test its worth before committing to its use (or not) on **The Borgias**. Its use, however, did have a bearing on the size and shape of some of the sets.

The "big name" guest star for MEGLOS was Bill Fraser, best remembered for his double-act performances with Alfie Bass in the ITV sitcoms **The Army Game** and **Bootsie and Snudge**. Born in 1907, he had appeared in films since the age of 21, including *Up the Chastity Belt* (1971). In the 1970s, he also appeared in Rumpole of the Bailey, but was known more recently to John Nathan-Turner and Terence Dudley from a guest appearance in **All Creatures Great and Small** and in Dudley's 1980 ecological thriller **The River Flows East**. With the tabloid newspapers still running articles on the various bids to "Save K•9" (his imminent demise from **Doctor Who** was announced as early as January 1980), John Nathan-Turner put out a press release that the curmudgeonly actor had only accepted the role of General Grugger on the pre-condition he would be allowed to kick the dog during the show (something he accomplished with the prop K•9 in episode three). Bill Fraser died in 1987.

Jacqueline Hill had more or less retired from acting in the early seventies, but had recently let it be known through her husband, producer/director Alvin Rakoff, that she was available again. A friend of Rakoff's, Terence Dudley suggested her for the part of Lexa, a choice which did not please some **Doctor Who** fans, who had hoped she would only return to the show in her established role as Barbara Wright. Since leaving Doctor Who in 1965, she appeared in Paradise Postponed, Angels, and Tales **of the Unexpected.** Jacqueline Hill died earlier this year.

The two remaining principal cast roles went to character actor Frederick Treves (as Lieutenant Brotadac) and veteran performer Edward Underdown (as Zastor), although no-one knew at the time of casting how ill Underdown had become. He struggled all through the long recording days despite severe chest and breathing problems. MEGLOS was his last acting role, and he died a few years later.



SET DESIGN: Flanagan and McCulloch had kept faithfully to Malcolm Hulke's suggestion of about half a dozen interior sets per episode of **Doctor Who**. The need for extra sets only arose because of the decision to mount exteriors in the studio as well.

An additional complication was the unavoidable need to split recording across two studios. Block two would be shot in TC3, but block one would be in the smaller confines of TC8.

Restricted for space, Philip Lindley compromised by designing several of the Tigellan walkway and annex areas as split level sets, using scaffolding and rigging to build two storey sets linked (in the one instance) by a spiral staircase.

Any sets that were either small, or could be shot with tight angles, went into block one. These included the jungle set by the Gaztak ship hatchway, the desert set by the ship's hatchway, the debating chamber, the sacrificial altar, the city airlock, the jungle clearing with the bell plants, and all the Tigellan city annex rooms, cave inlets and walkways.

In TC3 there was more space, allowing for larger sets to be built, such as the Tigellan control room, the TARDIS, the laboratory interior, the city entrance, the main jungle area (excluding the bell

plants), the power room and the blue screen/model area for all the exterior scenes on Zolpha-Thura.

Because of the need to approximate its possible use in **The Borgias**, the scale of the Zolpha-Thuran and blue screen sets around which the Scene-Sync cameras would pan and tilt was very similar - in other words, larger than would normally be the case for a studio-based **Doctor Who** model set. It was agreed

The Gaztaks stride through the Scene-Synch landscape of Zolpha-Thura

the set design department would handle the creation of the model stage area, although some construction would be farmed out to visual effects.

The model stage was erected on a platform raised over three feet from floor level. This was for two reasons. Firstly the stage had to be high enough to give the Electronic News Gathering (ENG) camera a level view of the set - an important consideration for Scene-Sync to work. Secondly it would enable the spectacular shot of the hidden laboratory rising out of the sand, accomplished by the simple process of pushing it up through a hole in the stage.

The blue screen area to the right of the model stage occupied nearly a third of TC8's floorspace, and was necessary for recording all the long shots. A ramp draped in blue cloth was constructed to the same angle of slope as the one leading down from the Gaztak ship model.

Despite the size of the blue screen area, the team still needed to move the relative position of the space ship model unrealistically close to the screens to achieve many of the synchronised shots.

Another penalty was the size of the space ship model. A design department prop rather than a visual effects product, it proved too heavy to be flown on invisible wires. The only option, on the last day of recording, was to have a stage hand, concealed by the screens, manually lift the model into the air.

COSTUME: Flanagan and McCulloch were not entirely happy with the realisation of the Gaztaks. "We didn't see the costumes until we were in the studio," recalled Flanagan, "and we hadn't seen the drawings." They had envisaged a rootless gypsy band of looters, a badly-drilled mercenary army which looked the same but who wore scavenged clothing. They described them in the script as "space pirates", but as Flanagan recalled groaningly: "The designer saw the word 'pirates' and we got something out of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera." Picking up on some (if not all) of the costume ideas from Flanagan and McCulloch's script, June Hudson created Grugger's headpiece from a hub cap.

There were several examples of costume reuse in the serial. Brotadac's jacket was previously won by Pletrac in CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS. It was necessary to provide two copies of the Doctor's jacket for the final episode. The Tigellan helmets were the same type as worn by the Skonnon guards in THE HORNS OF NIMON. Grugger wears the Graff's hat from THE RIBOS OPERATION. And Romana starts episode one wearing the same costume as she wore in THE LEISURE HIVE.

June Hudson describes the rest of the details about MEGLOS costumes in her article *Costume drama* on page 6.

MAKE-UP: The script stipulated the Tigellans as a race of tall, elegant, blond Caucasians with the Savants, in particular, looking very streamlined and androgynous. The potential high cost of kitting out all the cast with blond wigs was obviated by agreeing with costumes that all the Deons and the guards would wear cowls or headpieces to hide their real hair underneath. Only Edward Underdown was exempt, as his naturally silver hair was considered blond enough already. The design of the blond wigs was similar to Vidal Sassoon's classic cut for Mary Quant in the "mini-skirt" era, save for an additional mid-forehead "peak".

An extra touch was adding strands of very long white-blonde hair emerging from the back of Lexa's headgear, to emphasise her rejection of the cropped, ordered look favoured by the Savants.

Although it was not what Flanagan and McCulloch had in mind, Dudley, Hudson and Hay-Arthur favoured an image of Atilla the Hun's army for the appearance and garb of the Gaztaks. Most of the extras hired were Oriental or Asian. Initially it was discussed making up Bill Fraser and Frederick Treves to look oriental, but eventually a consensus was reached that they should just look scruffy and un-

Brotadac and Grugger survey the desolate landscape to which Meglos has drawn them

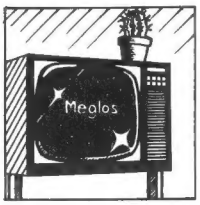
kempt with wild beards.

Meglos himself was Cecile Hay-Arthur's prime concern during recording days. Both Tom Baker and Christopher Owen had to endure having face casts taken, and then wearing thin, latex masks studded with spine-inlaid modules. Matching pairs of latex gloves completed the styling of a cactus-like alien.

VISUAL EFFECTS: Although involved in a minor capacity with the Zolpha-Thuran set, and aside from the standard requirement of guns (some reused from THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR and THE HORNS OF NIMON), and communicators, Steve Drewett's main commitment was the bell plants.

Aware that he was inheriting Ian Scoones' post on the delayed **Triffids** production, Drewett saw MEGLOS as an opportunity to test out some of the

Continued on page 12



Going back in time

Doctor Who's primetime battle with Buck Rogers

BUCK ROGERS was still in the ascendant as MEGLOS began its four week run on September 27th 1980. Although it never got anywhere near the ratings of **Doctor Who** at its peak, the show did pull six million or so viewers - enough to split the floating audience and give an additional regular four million to the adventures of Buck, Wilma and the robot Twiki.

As would be common throughout season 18, episode one of MEGLOS pulled the highest figure of the serial, attracting a five million rating as some floating viewers tuned in to see what the new story was like. Presumably not all that impressed, the viewing numbers dropped back the following week to a disastrous 4.2 million, narrowly avoiding a distinction of becoming the all-time lowest rated episode ever only by its tied position with part three of THE SMUGGLERS in 1966. Fortunately episodes three and four reversed the good Doctor's fortunes with a rise back to 4.7 million viewers apiece.

Understandably, none of the episodes reached the top 100, the respective positions being 105th, 139th, 129th and 127th. The overall average of just 4.65 million viewers was another low in the programme's fortunes, but then again BBC1 as a whole was suffering a very aggressive attack by the networked forces of ITV.

One explanation for **Doctor Who**'s dramatic drop was ITV's decision to pull forward the start time for **Buck Rogers** to 5:45 pm, twenty minutes ahead of its rival and more than enough time to cement an audience already hooked by the other new (and rather popular) children's show, **Metal Mickey**, which immediately preceded it. Created by producer Mickey Dolenz (formerly famous as one of The Monkees), **Metal Mickey** was yet another cute 1980s television robot.

In the four weeks since the start of the autumn 1980 seasons, ITV had consolidated its hold on the Saturday line-up. Still basking in its acquisition of the evening's football rights, it had followed up with a soccer based quiz show, **Up for the Cup** directly opposite **The Generation Game**, which itself had lost ground since the departure of compere Bruce Forsyth and his replacement by Larry Grayson.

More importantly ITV had wheeled out a new weapon to grab later evening viewers, Roy Skeggs' **Hammer House of Horror** - a big-budget film series bringing back to the small screen such stars as Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. Almost adding insult to injury, two of Hammer's production team were ex-**Doctor Who** luminaries - script editor Anthony Read and effects designer Ian Scoones. Aimed primarily at the international market, **Hammer House of Horror** did well enough in its first year to merit a second season in 1981.

Pre-publicity for MEGLOS was very minor. The announcement of Jacqueline Hill's return to **Doctor Who** was only of interest within fan circles, and even there many voiced an adverse opinion that she was appearing as Lexa and not in her old role of Barbara Wright. More widely publicised was Bill Fraser's appointment to play General Grugger. Several of the Saturday tabloids for September 27th picked up on the story that Fraser had only accepted the role on the condition he would get to kick K-9 during the course of the serial.

The only real winner was Marvel Comics which had taken a commercially prompted decision in July 1980 to go monthly instead of weekly with its **Doctor Who** title. The first *Doctor Who Monthly* came out in August, the advantages to both the BBC and Marvel being a longer time span in which to plan issues, and a longer shelf-life for the finished publication. Producer John Nathan-Turner had agreed to Marvel's request for more advance and promotional material, with the result that issue 46 (published early October) was the first edition to feature a cover from a contemporary running story. However, the Production Office was reportedly less than happy with the BBC Photographic Library for giving out a slide of Tom Baker as Meglos with the edges of the latex "cactus" gloves clearly visible (see back page this issue).

ITV (LWT region) SATURDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 1980

5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
SPORT	NEWS / METAL MICKEY	BUCK ROGERS Cruise Ship to the Stars		UP FOR THE CUP (quiz)		Film SHOOT OUT			HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR Rude Awakening	NEWS	THE BIG MATCH	

BBC 1

5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
SPORT	THE DUKES OF HAZZARD		NEWS / DR. WHO Meg. ep.1	LARRY GRAYSON'S GENERATION GAME		JULIET BRAVO	PAUL DANIELS MAGIC SHOW	NEWS	film THE DROWNING POOL			PARKY

BBC 2

5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
BADMINTON	film SERFS			NEWS	RUGBY SPECIAL		WE, THE ACCUSED (drama)		BADMIN-TON	film THE RIVER FLOW EAST IN SPRING		

That synching feeling

How the programme once again took the lead in technological innovation at the BBC

DOCTOR WHO has always been at the forefront of television technology. The uniqueness of its format and production requirements have often made it an ideal target for testing new ideas and inventions. Scene-Sync was just such a new invention. Conceived and developed in the USA, it was offered free of charge to **Doctor Who** for evaluation towards its much wider and more extensive use in the BBC's big budget production of **The Borgias**, due to go into production in the summer of 1980. The sales brochure for Scene-Sync, produced some months after the system's first use in MEGLOS, is shown alongside this article.

Scene-Sync was an early form of motion-control for television, pioneered in the United States by Power-Optics Incorporated of Fairview Village, Pennsylvania. To a degree Scene-Sync rode of the back of a similar system developed a few years earlier and used extensively in the blockbuster film *Star Wars*. There the emphasis had been towards using motion control to "remember" and then duplicate camera moves, tilts, pans and zooms. Scene-Sync was more limited in application, its principle function being to keep the perspective of actors on a blue-screen set exactly relative to the view of a model set.

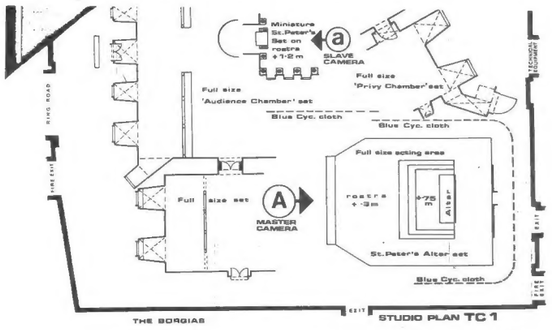
Franchised in 1979 to a British company (Evershed of Chertsey in Surrey), Scene-Sync was advertised to the BBC that same year. Producer for **The Borgias** Mark Shivas and his designer Tim Harvey were interested in using the system to overcome their logistical problem of having been refused permission to film in the real St. Peters or the Sistine Chapel. On paper this new technology looked good, but they insisted on a trail run before committing to hiring Scene-Sync and to its use on such a major production - a production which the BBC was expecting to be the costume drama triumph of the year.

The test platform selected was **Doctor Who**. Unlike **The Borgias**, a large budgetary overhead for the use of this specialist equipment was not required since it was agreed the sequences in MEGLOS would become something of an advertising show-reel for Scene-Sync's capabilities.

The Scene-Sync hardware was only brought into the Doctor **Who** studios for block two, since it would only be used for the model set based scenes on the surface of Zolpha-Thura recorded on days five and six. Essentially the equipment comprised two boxes on mounting brackets. One box fitted over the front of the master camera, shooting live action, the other fitted over the front of the smaller Electronic News gathering (ENG) slave camera set up to record the model set. A limitation imposed on both cameras was that they could only shoot "locked off" - in other words, neither camera could move. A cable linked both cameras, hooked up both to each camera's electronics and to the Scene-Sync boxes. The sensors in the master camera enabled basic motions, like tilting and panning, to be registered and relayed down to the slave camera, enabling the actions to be duplicated exactly.

The results impressed Mark Shivas enough to go ahead with booking Scene-Sync for **The Borgias**. But for all its attendant publicity, the system still relied a lot on the tricks of ChromaKey. On MEGLOS, blue painted flats still had to be put up in foreground on the live-action set exactly relative to the position of the Zolpha-Thuran screens on the model stage.

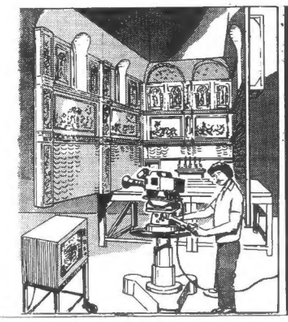
Overall the verdict by the **Doctor Who** production team was that the experiment had been worthwhile, but the perceived benefits would not warrant its paid-for use again on the programme. Digital technology advancements offered far more for the future. I·V

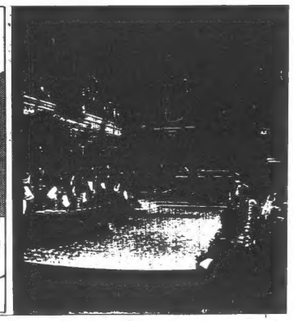


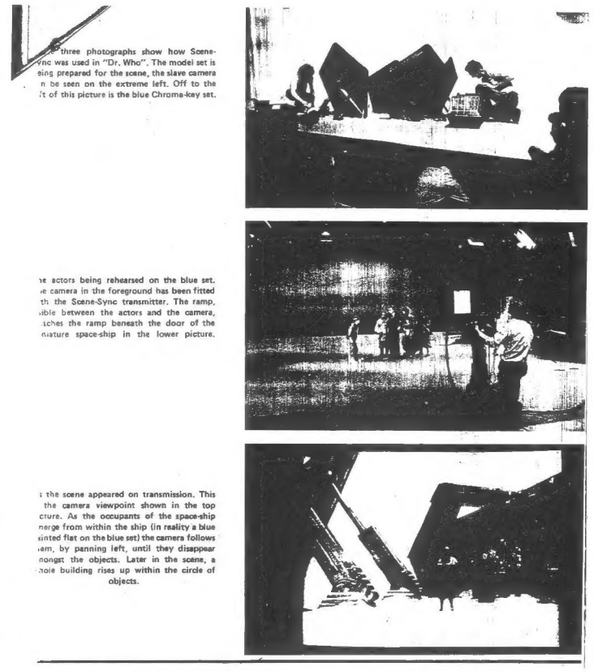
This is a simplified floor plan of a BBC studio showing how the miniature set was built amongst the conventional full-size sets. Both master camera 'A' and slave camera 's' were mounted onto conventional camera pedestals and were, therefore, easily moved in any plane when setting up. After the scenes in St. Peter's were recorded, the miniature was dismantled to leave the 'Audience Chamber' and the 'Privy Chamber' sets clear.

We acknowledge with thanks the assistance given by the BBC in the preparation of this leaflet. Photographs are BBC copyright. "The Borgias" was produced by Mark Shivas and directed by Brian Farnham. The Production Designer was Tim Harvey.

(LEFT) Sketch shows the model of the Sistine Chapel being set up for the scene, (RIGHT) which is taken from the screen. The canopy and table left, the floor painted to represent tiles, and the furniture were full-size. The altar and the walls were miniatures.







The three photographs show how Scene-Sync was used in "Dr. Who". The model set is being prepared for the scene, the slave camera can be seen on the extreme left. Off to the right of this picture is the blue Chroma-key set.

The actors being rehearsed on the blue set. The camera in the foreground has been fitted with the Scene-Sync transmitter. The ramp, visible between the actors and the camera, stretches the ramp beneath the door of the miniature space-ship in the lower picture.

How the scene appeared on transmission. This is the camera viewpoint shown in the top picture. As the occupants of the space-ship emerge from within the ship (in reality a blue painted flat on the blue set) the camera follows them, by panning left, until they disappear amongst the objects. Later in the scene, a whole building rises up within the circle of objects.

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Bridge Road,
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Telex: 929945 EPOCHY G
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Power-Optics, Inc.
P.O. Box 266,
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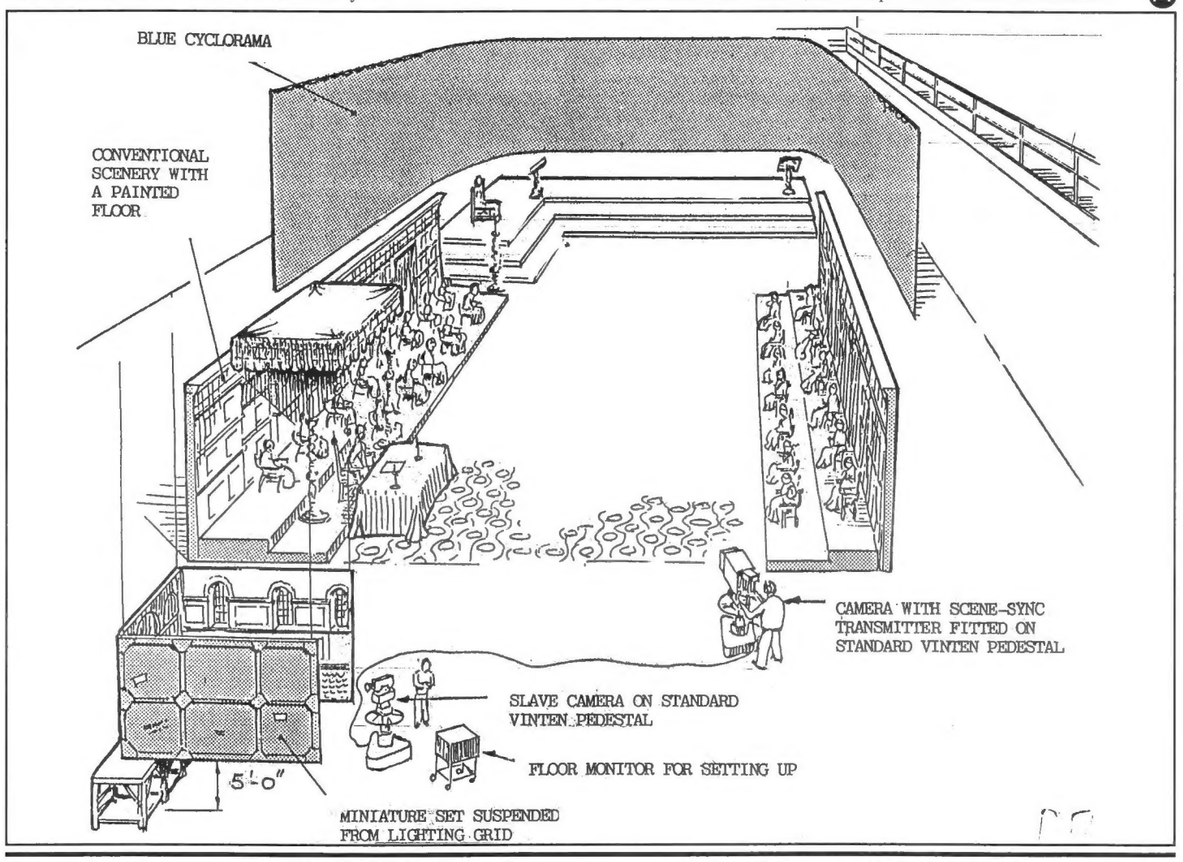

BLUE CYCLORAMA
CONVENTIONAL SCENERY WITH A PAINTED FLOOR
CAMERA WITH SCENE-SYNC TRANSMITTER FITTED ON STANDARD VINTEN PEDESTAL
SLAVE CAMERA ON STANDARD VINTEN PEDESTAL
FLOOR MONITOR FOR SETTING UP
5'-0"
MINIATURE SET SUSPENDED FROM LIGHTING GRID

"

THE BORGIAS, a ten-part drama series due for screening in the autumn of 1981, is reputed to be the most expensive BBC production to date and it will be seen many times in many countries of the world. The production was shot on a ten-week location schedule in Italy and then over several months at the BBC Television Centre in London.

The story of the infamous Borgia family makes compulsive television viewing which, added to exceptionally high standards of acting and production, is in the best traditions of BBC drama.

Two major interior scenes posed the director and designer very real problems - the first, the election of the Pope within the Sistine Chapel, and the second, the funeral inside St. Peter's in Rome. Normal studio sets were impossible, both economically and practically, since the buildings were larger than the area in which they were to be recreated. It was decided to use miniature sets, overlaid by Chromakey, and in addition to couple in the Scene-Sync system, so providing a pan and tilt facility to add flexibility and interest to the scenes. This system had previously been used to facilitate the use of vast structures in an episode of the BBC science-fiction series **Doctor Who**.

Tim Harvey, production designer for **The Borgias**, had the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's built as miniatures about the size of a small box set (approximately 12 foot or 4 metres high). In production, the acting area, surrounded by a conventional blue cyclorama, contained a few essential foreground details, such as a painted floor to represent ceramic tiles and some items of ecclesiastical furniture. The camera on the acting area was fitted with a Scene-Sync transmitter which provided pan and tilt position information for its slave mount. This slave, a motorised pan and tilt head complete with an ENG-type camera, was placed in position within the miniature set. As the master camera panned with the movements of the artists, the slave camera on the miniature set moved in synchronisation with it. The composite picture created for the viewer was a perfect illusion of action and situation. The result is so good that only a discerning professional will stop to consider how it was made possible.

This technique obviously saves expense but perhaps not so obviously makes possible shots which hitherto could not even be considered. Scene-Sync in its various forms is being accepted by the broadcast television industry and, added to the quality available from the many new Chromakey processes, it provides a perfect combination for the cost-conscious and a powerful tool for the imaginative.

"

Continued from page 8

ideas he already had for producing an animated, aggressive plant creature.

Restricted in being able only to afford one fully operational bell plant, the end result was a close cousin to the BBC Triffid. The monster had a bulbous base to hide the operator. A brace of "limbs" emerged from the base, although unlike the Triffid these were shown emerging from the main body by the simple expedient of recording them retracting, and then playing the video disc backwards. The bell heads were mobile, controlled by the operator lying on his side and pushing his arm up through the hollow stem.

The bell plants were not as sophisticated as their Triffid descendants and proved difficult to move convincingly on camera. To overcome this, Terence Dudley did most of the plant attacking shots in close-up.

Drewett's other vegetable-based contribution was the plant form of Meglos, which was essentially a cactus shape in thin-moulded rubber, slid over a large balloon which could be deflated on cue.

John Flanagan recalls one particular effect at the end of the story: "The entire planet blew up. Well, a model shot of this done in slow-motion would have been wonderful. We wrote in the script, in brackets: 'This should ideally make Krakatoa look like a sparkler on bonfire night'. All they did was white the screen, and it gives you the effect for sixpence."

Other effects included real fire torches in the Power Room and nearby areas, used to burn the ropes holding the huge prop rock over the Doctor's supine body.

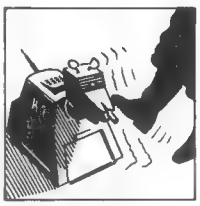
Traditional props and effects included the Gaztak pacifier, Meglos' redimensioner, prop rocks for Zolpha-Thura, plastic "eye baths" to heal damaged Deon eyes after the accident in episode 1, the large and small Dodecahedron props, the tree trunk used by the Gaztaks to break into the city, and a couple of doors which could be smashed and "lasered" through. Practical studio effects included gun explosions (and subsequent flashes when they hit targets like the city door).

Model shots included the Scene-Synch sequences on Zolpha-Thura (see *Studio Recording* below, and *That Synching Feeling* on page 10), and the Gaztak ship. Unfortunately, the final take-off of the Gaztak ship was done when the visual effects team were running out of time. Instead of flying the ship on wires, they had to stick a broom handle inside the model and lift it off the model set - an "effect" which, unfortunately, does show somewhat in the transmitted programme.

The Doctor - or is it Meglos? - seems surprised by Lexa and Zastor

Perhaps to emphasise the disparate sources of the space pirates' looted belongings (including, of course, at least two other **Doctor Who** serials), the Gaztak weapons fired a variety of coloured "laser beams". A familiar video effect was K•9's red splayed out beam, which had an additional black outline effect added at the points where he cuts into the room in which the Doctor and Meglos are imprisoned.

Overlaid white broken lines descending over the cabinets containing the Earthling and the Meglos prop suggested the process of redimensioning. The phase cancellation of the chronic hysteresis was suggested by artificially-induced picture shake. The landing of the Gaztak ship (unseen as a visual effect) was suggested with a simpler form of camera shake over the interior view , as though experienced by the ship's crew.



STUDIO RECORDING: Rehearsals at Acton ran from Saturday 14th June through to Tuesday 24th, and then from Monday 30th till 9th July.

Block one, in the reduced confines of TC8, began straight after rehearsals on Tuesday 25th June. With a lot to get through, artists and crew alike were only allowed a late start on day one, commencing at 14:00, instead of 10:30 which would be the norm on Wednesday and Thursday.

Although a lot of crowd sequences were done early on - including the fight at the city gates and the failed attempt to sacrifice the Doctor - Terence Dudley was not able to release many of his extras early. Unlike the majority of **Doctor Who** productions, almost a full complement of extras was needed on all six days.

Lalla Ward's big scene on day two was her fight with the bell plants - a complicated effects-based sequence which relied heavily on playing back video disk recorded material in reverse for shots such as the creepers wrapping around her legs. This was also done for the similar scene later with the Gaztaks.

To enhance K•9's contribution to the dramatic interplay ,Terence Dudley opted to use one of the new breed of minicams, enabling him to get moving camera angles of the dog from floor level.

Most of the sets were struck on Wednesday night to make way for further Tigellan interiors and jungle exteriors needed on the Thursday.

Block two went into TC3 on Thursday 10th July. One of the earliest scenes to be recorded was the Chronic Hysteresis sequence. This, plus the surrounding scenes in the TARDIS, took up much of the first recording day, reducing the need for any but the regular cast to be present until later in the afternoon. The TARDIS set was then struck overnight.

At the insistence of John Nathan-Turner, the TARDIS interior set walls had been rebuilt for the previously-recorded story ("The Wasting", which was broadcast as STATE OF DECAY). Both he and Christopher Bidmead wanted to make better use of the Doctor's ship, and so wanted a set that looked bigger and more robust than the one last seen in THE HORNS OF NIMON. Of course, as far as the audience were concerned, MEGLOS was their first sighting of the re-vamped set. As a mild continuity note, two of the fourth Doctor's old coats were draped onto the hat-stand, including John Bloomfield's cape-coat from THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG (which was

The Earthling is horrified when he disovers his plan for an early dinner has been spiked

later sold at an auction in the USA). For this story Tom Baker's Doctor was seen for the first time by the viewers without the red hat that went with his new costume. Unhappy with wearing a hat these days, Baker had dispensed with it as of the previously recorded story.

The Hysteresis scene was recorded first onto video disc before being played back and recorded to link in with the surrounding scenes. This proved not to be as easy as it sounded. A key effort went towards positioning the artists such that they lined up and could flow perfectly into each new scene at the end of the looped Hysteresis segment. The problem of doing this accurately every time was avoided in editing by using close ups at the end of the loop.

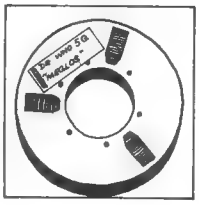
Day five saw the arrival and setting-up of the Scene-Sync equipment. Much of the remaining two days would be spent recording all the episode one and four scenes on Zolpha-Thura, although other scenes, involving smaller sets (such as the lab interior) were slotted in as well. One of visual effects' lesser contributions to this story was the supposed stream of flowing liquid meant to represent Meglos in his non-embodied form. Unable to achieve anything better, a textured sheet of thin rubber pulled along by a wire had to suffice.

Lighting played a crucial role in making the Scene-Sync shots work well since it was vital that lighting on the blue screen set should match that flooding the model stage, especially as half the scenes would be in daylight and the other half at night. This proved to be a problem. In order to get shadows on the blue screen set, the lights had to be quite bright, whilst on the model set they were subtler. The end result was a very atmospherically illuminated model, but populated by characters always seen in sharp relief, even in darkness.

Lighting effects were also used to suggest the immense power of the Dodecahedron (strongly lit from within) and the power surges in the city.

Although Scene-Sync worked well enough, it still relied on older ChromaKey techniques such as foreground blue screens or cut-out mattes for many sequences (like Grugger's stroll behind one of the screens) to work effectively. Where this had to happen, the tilt and pan facility of Scene-Sync could not be used. The Scene-Synch work is explained in *That synching feeling* on page 10.

As usual on the show, writers Flanagan and McCulloch were invited to the rehearsal read-through and to studio recordings.



POST-PRODUCTION: No sooner had MEGLOS vacated TC3 after three days than it was back in the studio on July 14th for tape-to-tape transfer, and then into TC1 for an eleven-hour gallery-only session to add video effects (laser bolts and the force patterns surrounding the energised Dodecahedron) and to complete some of the Quantel shots, such as the Doctor phase cancelling out the Hysteresis.

Editing the four episode's worth of video-tape then took five days - 18th, 19th and 24th July for the first two parts, followed by 23rd and 24th August for episodes three and four. Shibaden reviews took place on July 28th and August 25th, with final syphers and dubbing scheduled for August 16th and 18th (episodes 1 and 2), and September 9th and 10th (episodes 3 and 4), just 17 days ahead of part one's transmission.

On several days members of the cast, especially Tom Baker and Christopher Owen, were asked to come in and re-record some of their dialogue. Partly this was so their voices could be treated into the reedy tones of Meglos, and partly so that Tom Baker could be heard talking to himself in part four.

SPECIAL SOUND & MUSIC: As nearly always, Dick Mills was on hand to add special sounds to the audio tracks. In addition to remodulating the voices of Owen and Baker, and the usual requirement for ray gun effects, Mills also used the sound of an airline's jet engines for the motorised whine audible whenever the Zolpha-Thuran lab rose from the desert.

Special sounds included gunshots, the city power failure, noises of explosions, breaking out of the hysteresis, the redimensioning of Meglos, and a variety of voices.

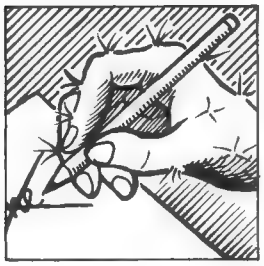
The "Nightmare Jungle" sound was used for the surface background noise on Tigella - a familiar effect from many other Doctor Who planets, including Skaro, Metebelis III, and Spiridon.

Although not credited, it is possible that Jacqueline Hill provided the voice warning of the closure of the city entrances (episode 3).

Rather like the costume department, the Radiophonic Workshop had originally agreed to split work on this **Doctor Who** season between two composers who would alternate on stories. Peter Howell had done THE LEISURE HIVE so, as Paddy Kingsland had done story two, it was Howell's turn again.

Unfortunately Peter Howell fell ill the week he was assigned to work on episode one, so at short

Continued on page 15



Double takes

JEREMY BENTHAM looks at script changes in MEGLOS - starting with page one, scene one

ALTHOUGH IT was common for **Doctor Who** scripts to undergo many changes between first rehearsal and final transmission drafts, MEGLOS was unusual in the amount and the nature of the changes made. Two of the episodes under-ran during timing runs, while a third came in nearly a minute too long.

From thedate of the re-drafts it appears likely most of the script revisions were done by Christopher Bidmead, fulfilling one of the primary responsibilities of a script editor. The most fundamental change he made was altering the name of artefact sought by Meglos to a Dodecahedron instead of a Pentagram which appears in all the Flanagan/McCulloch versions.

Presumably this was a logistical change to overcome a narrative flaw. A Pentagram is a two-dimensional five sided shape. For it to become three-dimensional it would need to gain two additional facets - a top and a bottom - thereby becoming septagonal in shape. The simplest five sided object is a three-dimensional triangle; three sides and a top and bottom. However this would not have fulfilled one of the requirements of the script which stressed that the object, once placed atop the laboratory tower, should present a pentagonal face to each of the five Zolpha-Thuran screens so that the artefact's energies would be radiated equally to each panel. With a background in mathematics, it is probable that Bidmead redefined the shape as twelve-sided, pentagram-faced object - in other words, a dodecahedron.

The first structural revision occurs on page one of episode one, with the addition of a whole new scene which, in one segment, re-establishes the Doctor and Romana having just left Argolis (Romana is still in her beach-wear), reminds the audience why K-9 is undergoing repairs, introduces Tigella, Zolpha-Thura and the screens, as well as mentioning that the Doctor has previously been to the Prion System before when he met Zastor.

Two additional reasons explain this scene's inclusion. Firstly it pads out a very short episode by nearly two minutes. Secondly it adds to the very few scenes in the first episode to involve the Doctor, Romana and K-9, who otherwise would only be seen in the repetitive Chronic Hysteresis sequences.

Curiously, the addition of this scene leads to a minor continuity error. In that opening TARDIS segment Romana quite assiduously keeps the Doctor's concentration focused on K-9's repairs and away from wandering off to contact Zastor. Yet, before those repairs are complete, Zastor tells Lexa and Deedrix that the Doctor is nearby and has asked to visit Tigella.

The inclusion of that opening recap scene necessitated a one-page alteration later on in the episode - deleting a short sequence of the Doctor and Romana working, operating theatre style, on K-9, with the former asking for, and being handed, a small sonic screwdriver, electro-pliers and finally a magnesium mallet!

One added point for future continuity was a limiting of K-9's operability. From this story onwards it was emphasised he could only run for two hours before needing a recharge, thanks to K-9's impromptu dip in the sea which had accelerated his rate of power depletion.

Another big three minute piece of padding is added just after Grugger seals the Earthling and the Meglos plant into their containment chambers. The plot briefly diverts as the General contemplates abandoning his arrangement and stealing all the lab equipment instead, only to discover Meglos has anticipated such treachery. The dialogue rejoins the script as the Gaztak leader activates the transference process.

Tom Baker himself suggested the visual mnemonic of the Doctor stumbling just before the Chronic Hysteresis loop starts over again.

Putting aside the mystery of how Meglos is instantly able to switch from being dressed in the Earthling's business suit to being dressed in the Doctor's garb, episode two opens with a continuity reference absent from the series since 1965. In Terry Nation's story THE CHASE (which was also the final story in which Jacqueline Hill appeared as Barbara Wright), the Doctor points to the central column of the TARDIS control console and identifies it as the Time Rotor - the device which measures the extent of the power thrust used by the ship when in flight. Not since then had the central column been so named, and it only happened in MEGLOS because John Nathan-Turner had made contact with several fans of the series.

The establishing shot of the Gaztak ship landed in the Tigellan jungle was never in any generation of the script. It was an on-the-day inspiration by Terence Dudley and his crew to place foliage in the foreground, close to the camera, such that the density of leaves and branches would obscure the Zolpha-Thuran background whereupon the Gaztak ship was truly resting.

A major rewrite occurs as the Doctor, Romana and K-9 land on Tigella and undertake their trek to the city. Although there are several scenes before they get to the gates ,K-9 has virtually no dialogue. In an attempt to redress this imbalance, one scene was rejigged to include some lines for John Leeson, adding a joke into the bargain. Originally scene 14 read as follows:

DOCTOR: I only got the direction wrong because of Tigella's anti-clockwise rotation.
ROMANA: Some of these leaves are burnt.
DOCTOR: No time for botany. We're late already.
ROMANA: Now what would cause that? Thinness of the atmosphere? The pentagram surges can't be reaching this far. Or the anti-clockwise rotation?

Rewritten the scene becomes:

DOCTOR: I only got the direction wrong because of Tigella's anti-clockwise rotation.
K-9: Anomaly.
ROMANA: What is it K-9?
K-9: Partial incineration of vegetation evident.
ROMANA: Nonsense K-9, these leaves are burnt.
K-9: Mistress??
DOCTOR: Come on, there's no time for botany.
ROMANA: What could cause that? Thinness of the atmosphere?
K-9: Negative Mistress. Projection of dodecahedron power insufficient. Foliation scanning period now terminated Mistress. Expedition necessary.

Episode three underran its time by nearly seven minutes on rehearsal read-through and therefore a lot of padding was needed. The first addition is a two-minute scene between Caris and Deedrix as they recount the events of the dodecahedron's theft and theorise about the nature of the object they have relied upon for so long.

Next, two new "run-around" scenes are appended as Romana leads the Gaztaks literally round in circles, bringing them back to their starting point, the ship. The interior scene in the cockpit, as Romana bluffs about Tigella's counter-rotation affecting her navigational skills, is also additional padding.

Tom Baker gets away with one of his infamous substitutions in what originally would have been scene 6. Questioned by Zastor and Lexa about his apparent double the Doctor originally replied: "You always get this problem with doppelgangers; knowing which one to trust". In an inspired change, Baker actually says: "That's the problem with doppelgangers you see; you never know who's who."

Still short by over two minutes, four new scenes were added to the episode after the Doctor and Zastor depart for the power chamber. First is a short 20-second cutaway - Lexa standing on the spiral staircase telling the Deons to prepare for action. Next is the short exchange between Deedrix and Caris as they spot all the Deons congregating - another 20-second filler ending with: "Deons. What are they up to?"

The publicity-making sequence of Grugger kicking K-9 is joined on as a 10-second prefix to his reunion with Meglos and the Gaztaks fleeing the city.

Lastly a whole one and a half minutes is added, beginning with Lexa's pronouncement: "Faith Deons, we can restore the Dodecahedron" and ending with the Gaztak ship preparing for lift-off, and Grugger's instruction to Brotadac: "Close the doors."

In total contrast to its predecessor, episode four actually needed shortening. The first cut occurs just after the Doctor has been freed from the sacrificial slab, and is quite a major loss of plot development as it explains the Tigellans beginning to contemplate a move back to the surface. Romana points out how the screens of Zolpha-Thura are mentioned in all the history books. The scene should have then progressed:

ZASTOR: Where it's gone hardly matters. What we must do now is evacuate the city.
DEEDRIX: We can't survive down here without power.
LEXA: *(to Zastor)* They were right. We should have been prepared for this.
ZASTOR: We have to open the emergency exits. Everyone must hurry. (they leave)
CARIS: Doctor, we can survive without the pentagram, but we must get to the surface
DOCTOR: *(absently)* Yes, of course. *(To Romana)* You'd better tell me everything you can remember about these screens.

The next cut is another whole page of script, just before Zastor shakes the Doctor's hand at the city gates and the time travellers prepare to leave for Zolpha-Thura. To a degree it follows on from the cut scene above.

ROMANA: And they've been like that for thousands of years. Just doing nothing
DOCTOR: Five screens?
ROMANA: And the pentagram has five sides. You don't think...?
DOCTOR: Yes I do. We'll find out for certain when we get to Zolpha-Thura.
LEXA: I must come too. The responsibility was mine.
DEEDRIX: No, Lexa. None of us realised. *(They see Zastor at the gates)*

The final bit of script revision is during the very last scene of the Doctor saying his goodbyes and preparing to take the Earthling home. To an extent it lessens the impact of the summons back to Gallifrey and Romana's mood swing into depression which would continue into the next story:

DOCTOR: *(seeing Romana emerge from the TARDIS looking very disturbed)* What's the matter?
ROMANA: We don't have to go, do we?
DOCTOR: Go? Where?
ROMANA: Gallifrey. A message has just come through from the Time Lords. A sort of summons.
DOCTOR: Summons! They wouldn't dare...
ROMANA: They want us back there immediately.
DOCTOR: Do they indeed. Why? *(Romana shrugs)* We'll see about that after we've dropped our friend here off on Earth - unless you want to stay here and do some gardening.

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No sooner have the Doctor and Romana found their newly refurbished console rom, thsn they are trapped in a time loop

Continued from page 13

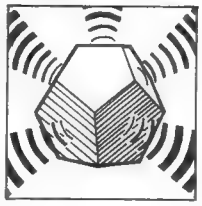
notice Paddy Kingsland had to step back in to complete the episode's music - which he did very quickly after his work on FULL CIRCLE, and shortly before going on holiday.

The end result was two different musical styles and preferences in one episode of the story. Kingsland preferred working purely with synthesisers, composing all his incidental music as original pieces using keyboard instruments. He also favoured a degree of musical continuity that would say "This is a **Doctor Who** story rather than anything else" and so tended to keep to the same group of synthesisers. This accounts for the similarity in thematic tone and sound between his tracks for MEGLOS, STATE OF DECAY and FULL CIRCLE.

Peter Howell, the more classically trained musician, liked using Radiophonic technology to rearrange different forms of music. He had done it with Ravel and Holst in THE LEISURE HIVE. This time it was the turn of Gregorian Chants to receive the Howell treatment. Using drum synthesisers and keyboards for his bass rhythms he added a Gregorian Chant (made up of nonsense words) using a vocoder for the Deons' theme. Howell's more famous use of the vocoder was for the "Greenwich Chorus" music in the Jonathan Miller series **The Body in Question**.

As in THE LEISURE HIVE, Howell was again able to work a **Doctor Who** theme variant into the incidental music - this time to cue the audience to recognise the real Doctor's arrival in the Deon city. The Meglos-Doctor is also differentiated with the *leitmotif* that identifies him at other times in the serial; this "rattling" sound is possibly a punning reference to rattlesnakes, which one would expect to hear in the places where one would usually find cactuses.

After his work on THE LEISURE HIVE, Howell explained, "MEGLOS had a much more intimate feel to it. I honed in on percussive sounds and a bit of vocalising treated on the vocoder , which gave an unusual claustrophobic feel to the story."



TRANSMISSION: MEGLOS premiered on Saturday September 27th at 6:15 pm. However, alarmed by the programme's poor showing in the ratings against **Buck Rogers**, BBC Programme Planning brought episode three's start time five minutes ahead of **Buck Rogers** by advancing it to 5:40, the slot where **Doctor Who** would more or less remain until after its Christmas break. To do this, the programme swapped places with the BBC1 **News**, and **Basil Brush** (30 minutes long) replaced **The Dukes of Hazzard** (50 minutes long) after the end of **Grandstand**. However, ITV's London franchise-holder London Weekend Television broadcast **Metal Mickey** at 5:15pm, followed by Buck Rogers at 5:45pm. (See *Going back in time* on page 9 for more audience analysis.)

The *Radio Times* entry for part one was headed "Doctor Who" in place of the usual "Dr. Who", a change requested by the producer.

The review of episode one in *The Times* praised the series, observing that Doctor Who managed to make a limited production budget somehow look limitless.

The programme was syndicated in North America as a 77 minute TV movie, and it arrived in Australia for ABC on 24th March 1981, classified 'G'.

TRIVIA: The spiral staircase prop featured largely in this serial became the focal point of the Meglos exhibit when it was reassembled at Madame Tussauds in London. There a waxwork mannequin of the cactoid Meglos (see photo on page 5) stared balefully down at passers-by once the exhibition opened to the public on September 1st 1980, following a £900 launch party, funded by the BBC, the night before to advertise the exhibition to the Press.

John Nathan-Turner later reflected that MEGLOS was the least favourite of his Tom Baker stories - rather "run-of-the-mill", he observed. Lalla Ward thought the story too frightening for children. Musician Peter Howell disagreed: "It was a cracking story".

The camera and transmission scripts for MEGLOS bore the neon **Doctor Who** logo on the front page - the first time the logo had been used on **Doctor Who** scripts.

Writer Andrew McCulloch is a relative of actor Ian McCulloch who played the lead role of Greg Preston in Terence Dudley's series **Survivors**.

Rumour had it that the reason for a short title, rather than "The Last Zolpha-Thuran", was to avoid making the typeface too small in the opening credits. However, this didn't prevent the reduction in typesize and splitting over two lines of the authors' credit in the opening title sequence.

The serial seems to run continuously, with events taking place in the elapsed time of the programme. (The exception to this is arguably the Gaztak flight between planets.) The city will shut down in approximately two hours - about the length of the serial. There are several continuity puns: Romana's words at the start of the time loop, the Doctor anticipating his punch by Brotadac, the Earthling's promise to get home from work within 20 minutes and possible arrival before he actually left.

Could some of the cast have known during

Continued on page 18

Organism and artefact

DAVID OWEN reassesses the story that contemporary reviewers placed bottom of the Season 18 ranking

HINDSIGHT HAS been kind to MEGLOS. A story which achieved dismally low ratings upon transmission, accompanied by the ultimate thumbs-down from the DWAS season poll (it ranked bottom), now has the unique and fascinating status of a half-way house between the Williams/Adams and Nathan-Turner/Bidmead production styles. Such stories in the past have included the more-obviously situated ROBOT (Letts/Hinchcliffe) and HORROR OF FANG ROCK (Hinchcliffe/Williams). Unlike them, MEGLOS, was produced fourth within the new producer's regime, and therefore counts more as a stylistic throwback than an interim story.

Like the majority of this season's stories, MEGLOS involves the Doctor arriving as an ancient threat is awakening from long dormancy. This is a perennial theme of **Doctor Who** stories, possibly because it emphasises the anachronistic nature of the series, and permits pages and pages of dialogue detailing the precise nature of the horror.

Unlike the surrounding stories, the attempt to depict a three-dimensional alien society is less than successful. In fact it's pure **Star Trek** - two sets of uniformed followers, the Deons and Savants, the former the archetypal (or should that be stereotypical) Luddites, the latter the cynical technologists, both at each other's throats constantly. This is a classic example of how easy it is to dichotomise this story. It falls neatly into opposing halves - Deons vs. Savants, Nature versus Science, Organism versus Artefact, Doctor versus Meglos, the ad-hoc acquisitiveness of the Gaztaks versus Meglos' premeditated master plan. Fortunately, there are so many interesting pseudo-scientific twists to the story, that it doesn't really *need* a deep socio-political treatment of the Tigellans to make it work.

Part one promises much more than the remainder of the story can deliver. This can be said of many **Doctor Who** stories, as new characters and sets are unveiled for the first time, and as new plot threads are ambiguously introduced, before the writer has to tie things down. It is even more true than usual here. Part one is a visual extravaganza - the screens of Zolfa-Thura would be an impressive enough model set by themselves, but it is truly breathtaking to see General Grugger and his Gaztaks actually walking around it, even accompanied by their shadows. Grugger even *scratches* the base of one of the screens. Electronic effects had come a long way indeed since UNDERWORLD. The underground city on Tigella is far more impressive than the jungle above it, which is saved for part two. We only have Romana's description of "lush, aggressive vegetation" to go on, which is far more suggestive than the set, unfortunately.

The perfectly-balanced Tigellans, with two speaking representatives from each caste, are merely adequate characters to play out the drama on their world, the only levity being provided by their budget 'Rugs-R-Us' headgear. By contrast, the Gaztaks are reminiscent of the bandits in THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT, or even, with hindsight, Kraiklyn's team from Iain M. Banks' *Consider Phlebas*. (One can easily speculate that Banks may have watched MEGLOS, since his later novel features not only such an unsavoury team of smash-and-grab space bandits, but also a devious polymorph impersonating authority figures). Despite the fact that only Grugger and Brotadac (an anagram of 'bad actor', perhaps only justified by his scream of "She's seen too much - kill her!" at part two's conclusion) have speaking parts, they add much to the story, bringing a glimpse of a much wider, post-technological cosmos than the sterile, closed system of Zolpha-Thura and Tigella.

The Doctor is initially established as a Savant in the opening TARDIS scenes echoing that of the previous year's DESTINY OF THE DALEKS. Wearing a blacksmith's apron and poring over K-9's circuits and the instruction manual (did he write this himself?) he appears every inch the engineer. His new opponent's introduction is splendidly dramatic. "Gentlemen", he begins, as Dick Mills realises perfectly what a cactus would sound like if it could talk! The tension in the laboratory scene rises palpably as first the Zolfa-Thuran takes the Earthling's form and then the Gaztaks realise that "this Meglos can bend time". The story's high point comes as he traps the Time Lords "like flies in amber", and when asked whether the Doctor gets to Tigella or not, turns around saying "Oh, but he does gentlemen, he does. We mustn't disappoint the Tigellans!", revealing that he now has the form of the Doctor. This scene is worth the price of admission alone.

It's not *all* downhill from here, of course; anything with a dual role for Tom Baker can't be all bad. His Meglos is callous, paranoid, and offhand, and at times not all that dissimilar to his Doctor! Indeed, many, many years later, when Baker was reviewing clips from his stories for *Doctor Who: The Tom Baker Years* (BBC Video), he appeared to be unaware that the performance he was seeing was not in the part of the Doctor.

The doubles are another case of opposing duality in the story. Equally matched in strength, but with opposing belief systems, they maintain a stalemate for much of the story. The Doctor's first defeat of Meglos, in breaking free from the chronic hysteresis, demonstrates once again that his forte is in being a jack of all trades. He observes that there is no known *technological* procedure available to him, and resorts to a humanistic one instead - the immensely entertaining acting out of the events of the time loop to throw it out of phase. The message is that the Doctor succeeds by being neither exclusively a technologist nor a mystic but, as Zastor so eloquently puts it "a little of each and a great deal more of something else".

Such a rich turn of phrase is representative of the

Unlike the contemporary review last issue, this one was written in 1993 - more than a decade after MEGLOS was first broadcast. At that time, the story was seen to be the poorest of an otherwise refreshingly superior season. How has it fared since then?.

"Anything with a dual role for Tom Baker can't be all bad. His Meglos is callous, paranoid, and offhand, and at times not all that dissimilar to his Doctor"

dialogue as a whole. The verbal dexterity sits better with Meglos himself (both as portrayed by Christopher Owen and Tom Baker) than with the Tigellans, especially Deedrix and Caris, but flowery language has always suited **Doctor Who** villains better than their opponents. The sheer quantity of dialogue is at odds with the more filmic previous story, THE LEISURE HIVE.

The middle two episodes are perhaps the weakest for sheer story development, but nonetheless provide some memorable moments. The recurring struggle between Meglos and the Earthling is both by a poignant sight of them locked in struggle but by Peter Howell's synthesiser oscillators de-phasing. Howell's contribution is memorable, not only for being able to follow Paddy Kingsland's strong score for the opening episode, complete with vocoder chants for the Deons, but for the rattling cactus motif applied to Meglos, whatever his form.

For all the shortcomings of the Savant's toupees and the foam rubber jungle, this is on the whole a rather stylish production. The Doctor and Romana both sport vivid burgundy costumes, the latter topped off with cream ruffles. The essential conflict of the story is told in the contrast between the Gaztaks' functional gun-metal unstreamlined spacecraft and the creeping jungle of Tigella, and the way that the screens of Zolpha-Thura stand proud amidst the silent desert - technology and nature at odds throughout. Stalking stalks and creeping creepers are well represented by hand-held camera work.

This technique, as well as providing the quintessential **Doctor Who** element of a threat made all the more menacing by its being unseen also (with the use of a fish-eye lens) has the benefit of making cramped studio sets appear much larger - it would be used again to similar effect (Romana being terrorised again!) in WARRIORS' GATE.

Another quintessential **Doctor Who** element is the ability to appeal to differently sophisticated sections of the audience simultaneously. Here kids, and those without a sense of irony, get a belter of a space opera, on a par with the more recent INVISIBLE ENEMY, PIRATE PLANET, or NIGHTMARE OF EDEN, but with substantially higher production values. Those watching for the series' wit (assuming they had managed to stick with **Doctor Who** through the verbally sparse, and somewhat po-faced LEISURE HIVE) would be rewarded with some great one-liners. Like the aforementioned bandits in THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT, Grugger's Gaztaks are little more than buffoons, and once again Romana (this time almost literally) succeeds in running rings around them. Swallowing, but not comprehending her apocryphal explanation of counterclockwise planetary rotation, Grugger paraphrases to Brotodac - "rotating, direction, revolving". Wonderful.

By now, so much of Tom Baker's dialogue had been ad-libbed that writers had incorporated his sense of humour into the character of the Doctor, so it's hard to attribute the leading man's comic utterances here. From the unforgivable "Many hands will make the lights work" to the later more subtle pondering to Meglos of "Why a good-looking chap like you should want to control the universe", they always entertain, without detracting from the drama. Or, in this case, melodrama.

There is really very little wrong with MEGLOS. It earned disdain when season eighteen was being initially evaluated, simply by not being representative of the textually experimental style the series was exploring at the time. In itself, it is much more enjoyable than some of its contemporaries.

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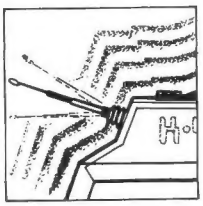
Continued from page 15

recording that Tom Baker was leaving the series? Although the public announcement would not be made until mid-season transmission, Baker had made his decision earlier. This could add another nuance to Brotadac's request for the Doctor's/Meglos' overcoat "now that he's finished playing the Doctor".

There is an unfortunately "reality" lapse when Lalla Ward steps into the cell containing the Doctor and Meglos, and puts her hand onto the (supposedly) recently laser-cut edge of the door. Minor points include: Caris and Deedrix do not seem overwhelmed by their journey to Zolpha-Thura in the TARDIS, and they walk away from the TARDIS with Romana and K•9 with the double doors apparently ajar. The edge of Tom Baker's cactus glove is visible down his sleeve at one stage - though not so obviously as on the front of *Doctor Who Monthly* close to the transmission date (see also photo on the back page of this issue).

Meglos demanded that the Gaztaks bring him a "male Caucasian about two metres tall". Other familiar measurements include time: the Tigellans measure in years - and when Meglos sees the Dodecahedron, he says "ten thousand years", which presumbaly is the length of time since he last saw it.



CONTINUITY: The TARDIS hovers at the beginning of the story. The screens of Zolpha-Thura are known to Romana. The Doctor, of course, knows Tigella from his visit fifty elapsed years previously, and presumably he visited in the same incarnation - Zastor recognises the Meglos impersonation easily, though it seems "older and wiser" (which must please Meglos - he thinks he is wiser than everyone, and he's been around for at least 1,000 years).

Zastor describes a rather idealised version of the Doctor: "He sees the threads that join the universe together, and mends them when they break" seems a little over-generous, but then the fourth Doctor can make rather an impression on people. Is he s scientist or a madman? "A little of each and a great deal more of something else," Zastor assures us, adding later that he has a "delicacy of touch". He also observes that "The Doctor has the maturity to respect many points of view". Even if he believes all this, it makes his failure to spot the arrogant, demanding doppelganger a little suspicious.

K•9 has a hardback instruction and repair manual (title unknown), which contains post-repair test questions. To repair K•9, the Doctor and Romana use magnetic tweezers. Romana later tweezes her way out of the bell plants' grasp. The repair leaves K•9 requiring a battery recharge every two hours. To unjam K•9's probe circuit, waggle his tail. During the repair, Romana reminds the Doctor "I was fully qualified when I arrived" (in THE RIBOS OPERATION).

When Meglos calls up the Doctor's details on screen, it shows "DATEB (*sic*) OF ORIGIN: PRION YEAR O??" (the ?? is not visible, so this could be a number beginning with zero or a word beginning with the latter 'O').

A chronic hysteresis is a fold of time, in which people caught up in it repeat words and actions over and over, with "freedom" only temporarily at the flipback point. Since there is no known technological procedure for breaking out of it, the Doctor and Romana escape by dephasing the loop, which is achieved by approximating their words and actions before they reoccur. The Doctor later speculates that a chronic hysteresis could project a time image.

Savants are scientists (possibly a pun on "knowledge workers"). Their underground home has sectors (at least eight) corridors, sub-corridors, landings (at least two), a control centre, a power room (which houses the Dodecahedron), and "the Chamber" (which seems to be where the Deons meet in parliamentary session).

When bell plants sense prey is nearby, they "bristle" at their roots.

The full-size Dodecahedron is probably too heavy for a dozen people to carry, if the Romana's assumption about its operation by baryon multiplication and the Doctor's guess at an atomic weight of 200 are both correct. When it's smaller, the Dodecahedron seems to be a different colour. When aligned with the screens of Zolpha-Thura, its tremendous power can be focused in five beams of light which converge at any point in the galaxy - blasting anything at that point "to infinitesimal dust". Rather than allow "a power many magnitudes greater than any intelligence has *ever* controlled" to become available, the Zolpha-Thurans took the drastic option of destroying everything they had.

Curiously, Meglos feels it necessary to check the screen alignments visually himself. He also misunderstands (or misrepresents) the nature of time travel: "Having lived in the future, I cannot die in the past" is, as Deedrix recognises, a philosophical paradox. Meglos' initial form is a xenobyte, which he has occupied by modulating himself on a particular wavelength of light. Romana recognises this from the glowing aura around the slimy green form of the escaping Meglos. The true form of the Zolpha-Thurans is presumably humanoid - the controls and doorways seem best suited to such a form.

While on Tigella, however, the Dodecahedron produced barely a fraction of its potential power - still enough to power the entire city. The true potential is 12 powers greater than that. Once the Dodecahedron is removed, the city uses up available power in little over two hours.

The Gaztaks are just one of as many as a thousand marauding bands. Grugger loses three of his six-man crew on Tigella. They thieve from a variety of places, but seem to value things in credits.

Continuity is discussed further in *Double Takes* on page 14.

Unexpectedly side-by-side, the Deons and the Savants face an uncertain future together

MEGLOS

Series 18, story 2
Serial 110, code 5Q
Episodes 536-539

NOTE: **IN•VISION** includes SHADA in its numbering scheme from the end of season 17 onward.

Cast

The Doctor - Tom Baker (1-4)
Romana - Lalla Ward (1-4)
Voice of K•9 - John Leeson (1)
Caris - Colette Gleeson (1-4)
Deedrix - Crawford Logan (1-4)
Zastor - Edward Underdown (1-4)
Lexa - Jacqueline Hill (1-4)
General Grugger - Bill Fraser
Lieutenant Brotadac - Frederick Treves (1-4)
Earthling - Christopher Owen (1-4)
Tigellan Guard - Simon Shaw (1-4)

Small and non-speaking

Meglos' Voice - Christopher Owen (1)
Gaztaks (1-4) - Tony Allef, Ranjit Nakara, Hi Ching, Bruce Callendar, John Holland, James Muir
Lexa's Deons (1, 3-4) - Terence Creasey, Edie Sommer, Ray Knight, Chris Marks
Deon Elders (1, 3-4) - Stephen Nagy, Sylvia Mariott, Lewis Hooper
Deons (2-3) - Michael Brydon, David Cleeve
Ceremonial Guards (4) - Michael Brydon, David Cleeve
Savants (2) - Stephen Kane, John Laing, David Cole, Howard Barnes
Tigellans (1-4) - Michael Gordon Browne, Harry Fielder, Laurie Goode, Peter Gates Fleming, Geoff Whitestone
Tannoy voice - Jacqueline Hill ? (3)

Crew

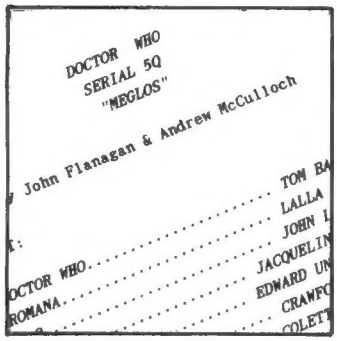
Writers - John Flanagan, Andrew McCullough
Copyright (K•9) - Bob Baker, Dave Martin
Title music - Ron Grainer
Realised by - Peter Howell, BBC Radiophonic.Workshop
Incidental music - Peter Howell (1-4), Paddy Kingsland (1)
Special sound - Dick Mills
Production assistant - Marilyn Gold
Assistant floor managers - Val McCrimmon (studio 1), Alex Bridcut (studio 2)
Director's assistants - Hermione Stewart (studio 1), Karen Loxton (studio 2)
Floor assistant - Alan Sandbrook
Lighting - Bert Postlethwaite
Technical manager - Brendan Carr
Sound - John Holmes
Grams operator - Andrew Hunter
Vision mixer - Graham Giles
Video effects - David Jervis
Videotape editors - Ian Williams, Sam Upton [scripts credit Rod Waldron (1-2) and Sam Upton (3-4)]
Senior cameraman - Alec Wheal
Crew - 11
Show working supervisor - Chick Hetherington
Scene crew - A3
Costume designer - June Hudson
Costume assistant - Sarah Leigh
Make-up artist - Cecile Hay-Arthur
Make-up assistants - Catherine Whitefield, Margaret Magee, Jan Lee, Janet Phillips
Visual effects designer - Steve Drewett
Design assistant - Mary Greaves
Designer - Philip Lindley
Production unit manager - Angela Smith
Executive producer - Barry Letts
Script editor - Christopher H Bidmead
Producer - John Nathan-Turner
Director - Terence Dudley

Transmission

Part 1 - 27th September 1980, 6:15pm, BBC1 (18.16.08 - 24'43")
Part 2 - 4th October 1980, 6:15pm, BBC1 (18.17.22 - 21'24")
Part 3 - 11th October 1980, 5:40pm, BBC1 (17.42.00 - 21'16")
Part 4 - 18th October 1980, 5:45pm, BBC1 (17.44.00 - 19'30")

Audience, Position, Appreciation

Part 1 - 5.0m, 105th, 61%
Part 2 - 4.2m, 139th, 64%
Part 3 - 4.7m, 129th, n/a
Part 4 - 4.7m, 127th, 63%



Filming

No special sequences shot.

Recording

Studio 1 - 25, 26, 27 June 1980, TC6
Studio 2 - 10, 11, 12 July 1980, TC3
Gallery sessions - 15, 31 July (video FX), TC6

VT editing

1: 18, 19 July 1980
2: 19, 24 July 1980
3: 23, 24 August 1980
4: 23, 24 August 1980

Sypher dubbing

1-2: 16, 17 August 1980 (track laying), 26 August 1980 (dubbing)
3-4: 9, 10 September 1980 (track laying), 10 September 1980 (dubbing)

Project numbers

1: 02340/9271
2: 02340/9272
3: 02340/9273
4: 02340/9274

Programme numbers

1: LDLC046W/72
2: LDLC047P/71
3: LDLC048J/71
4: LDLC049D/71

Television

All Creatures Great and Small (BBC)
Angels (BBC)
The Army Game (Granada, 1959-62)
Basil Brush (BBC)
The Big Pull (BBC, 1962)
The Body in Question. (BBC)
Boon: SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW (Central, 1986)
Bootsie and Snudge (Granada, 1960s, 1974)
The Borgias (BBC, 1981)
Braces High (BBC)
Buck Rogers in the 25th Century
Cluff (BBC, 1964-5)
The Combination (BBC)
Crown Court (Granada)
The Day of the Triffids (BBC)
Dr. Finlay's Casebook
Doctor Who (BBC, 1963-)
Doomwatch (BBC, 1970-72)
The Dukes of Hazzard (BBC)
Emmerdale Farm (Yorkshire)
The First Lady (BBC, 1968)
Flesh and Blood (BBC, 1980)
The Generation Game (BBC)
Granada Reports (Granada)
Grandstand (BBC)
Hammer House of Horror (ITV)
Juliet Bravo (BBC)
Maigret: THE JUDGES HOUSE (BBC, 26.11.63)
The Mask of Janus (BBC, 1965)
Metal Mickey (ITV)
Oil Strike North (BBC, 1975)
Paradise Postponed
Parkin's Patch (Granada)
Play for Today (BBC)
The Regiment BBC, 1973)
The River Flows East, (BBC, 1960)
To the Manor Born (BBC)
Robin of Sherwood: THE BETRAYAL (HTV/Goldcrest, 1986)
Rumpole of the Bailey (Thames, 1978-92)
A Soft Touch
The Sound of Laughter: A Bit of a Do (ATV)
The Sound of Laughter: Bricks Without Straw (ATV)
Sleepers (BBC, 1991)
Softly, Softly (BBC)
Star Trek (NBC)
Survivors (BBC, 1975-77)
The Sweeney (Thames)
Tales of the Unexpected (Anglia)
Thats Your Funeral (1971)
The Troubleshooters
Vendetta (BBC, 1966-67)
Up for the Cup (ITV, 1980)

Publications

Antonine Killer 1 (Miles Booy, 1989)
Castrovalva 1 (John Nathan-Turner, 1984)
Consider Phlebas (Iain M. Banks)
Definitive Gaze 1 (John Flanagan interview)
Doctor Who: 25 Glorious Years (Jacqueline Hill interview, 1988)
Doctor Who - Meglos (Dicks, 1983)
Doctor Who Monthly 1986 WS, 105 (Jacqueline Hill interview, 1985), 106 (Angela Smith interview, 1986), 147, 1987 AS (June Hudson interview), 194 (Peter Howell interview), 195 (press comments)
Eye of Horus 8 (Justin Richards, 1985)
Files Magazine: Season 18 (John Peel)
The Highlander 12 (Brian Robb, 1987)
Images 2-3 (Paddy Kingsland interview, 1981)
The Master Tape 4 (Martin Hughes, 1987)
Matrix 11 (Jacqueline Hill interview, 1980)
MLG Megazine 21 (Martin Wiggins, 1987)
Radio Times (BBC Publications)
Queen Bat 1 (Paddy Kingsland and Peter Howell interviews, 1985)
Steel Sky 4 (Peter Howell interview, 1983)
Tardis 6/3&4 (Terence Dudley interview, 1981), 11/3,(Paddy Kingsland interview, 1986)
TV Zone 14 (June Hudson interview, 1990)
Web Planet 10 (June Hudson interview, 1982)
Whovian Times 17 (Jacqueline Hill interview, 1988)
Writing for Television. (Hulke)

Film and video

Doctor Who: The Tom Baker Years (BBC Video)
Sweeney 2 (Clegg, 1978)
The Red Baron..
Upthe Chastity Belt (Kellett, 1971)

Doctor Who

THE ANDROID INVASION
CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS
THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT
DESTINY OF THE DALEKS
THE FACE OF EVIL
FULL CIRCLE
THE HORNS OF NIMON
HORROR OF FANG ROCK
THE INVISIBLE ENEMY
THE LEISURE HIVE
NIGHTMARE OF EDEN
THE PIRATE PLANET
REVENGE OF THE CYBERMEN
THE RIBOS OPERATION
ROBOT
STATE OF DECAY
THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG
WARRIORS' GATE
UNDERWORLD